



Creating Your Own Video Project From Start to Finish: A Basic Overview

The following gives you an overview of the basics of producing a video project. The instructions are written using the school's equipment as a model, but can be modified to equipment you have access to at home. These instructions pertain projects where only one camera is being used.

The Basics

TRIPODS

A tripod is a three legged stand. If you have a tripod for your camera, using it will guarantee you a steadier picture. The camera is mounted on the tripod by use of a shoe - a screw that is on the top of the tripod and fits into the base of the camera. The height of the tripod can be adjusted to fit your needs. The tripod is also able to be adjusted in terms of how much tension is needed for smooth movement. You should practice moving and framing subjects with the camera on the tripod. Practice zooming in and out, and following someone walk across the room. Whenever possible a tripod should be used.

CAMERA/VIDEO

There are many different kinds of video cameras. They come in different sizes and shapes. Some use tapes that fit into a standard VCR, while others use tapes which need to be played through the camera in order to view on a television screen. It is important that before you take part in any video taping you understand how the

camera which you are using works. Have someone show you the basics

1. Powering the camera : Camera's use 2 different types of power. AC and DC.

AC (Alternating Current) is when you plug the camera into an electrical socket. You need to plug the AC adapter into the back of the camera, (some camera's have an AC adapter cable attached to the AC adapter, some have a separate cord that needs to be plugged into both the camera and the adapter)and then put the electrical plug into an electrical socket.

DC (Direct Current) is battery power. The batteries have + and - signs on them, match those signs up with the ones on the battery pack holder on the back of the camera, the battery should slid right in, and with little effort from you, should CLICK into place, if this is difficult, check to see if you put the battery in the right way.

*****After using the batteries, return them to the Media Specialist or to the TV studio(Middle and High School) and let whom ever you returned it to know that the battery needs to be charged.

2. Tape

Before using any new video tape, fast forward it to the end of the tape then rewind it. This is called stretching the tape . Stretching the tape before using it allows for a better recording. (You should stretch the tape in a VCR, DO NOT stretch it in the camera!)

3. Framing your shot

1. Zoom is a word to describe the closing in and widening of the camera lens. When you zoom in on something, the camera sees a closer image of what ever you are looking at, where as if you zoom out the camera sees a broader image of what ever you are looking at. For example, let's say you wanted to video tape someone getting the mail at a mailbox at the end of a driveway. If you were to zoom in on this shot, the camera may only see the person and the mailbox. If you were to zoom out on this shot, the camera may see the person, the mailbox, part of the driveway, and a bit of the surroundings such as the road or the house across the street. You should practice zooming in and out with your camera and note how it affects the image the camera sees and can record.

2. FOCUS: Make sure your image is in focus. Some camera have an auto focus switch . If this switch is turned on the camera will focus the image for you. If you would like to manually focus, make sure the camera focus button on the side of the camera is on manual. Zoom in all the way the farthest point away from you, and move the focus ring on the camera until your shot is in focus. When you zoom out anything between you and that point should stay in focus. (You can use the auto focus most of the time, you can use manual focus when you are taping something where people are moving a lot, if you use auto focus when there is a lot of movement, the auto focus gets confused, and blurs the picture.)

3. Tilt up and tilt down is when you need to move the camera up or down. You might have to much head room over the subjects you are taping, so you would tilt down , if you need more head room you would tilt up . (head room is the amount of space that is left over someone head, to much or to little can make your shot look awkward)

4. Pan left and Pan right is when you need to move your shot to the left or right to include something in the shot.

5. Trucking and Dollying is when the Tripod is on wheels, (Usually in the Studio) You move the entire camera and tripod. You dolly up or Back, and you truck right or left.

6. Light Don't shoot into windows, lights, or at the sun. If the subject you are shooting is in front of a window, reflections from the glass or the brightness outside will affect your image. Shooting into lights or at the sun not only affects your image, but it may hurt the camera.

7. Hand held camera, this refers to using the camera with out a tripod. When you first start to use the camera, you should always stay on a wide shot (Zoomed out all the way). If you need to Zoom in on something, then you physically move in to the subject. (hand held shots tend to be very shaky, and the more the camera is zoomed in, the more pronounces the shaking is.)

When holding and operating the video camera on your shoulder, keep your feet shoulder width apart and your knees slightly bent. This will help you to remain steady when recording.

8. When taping, always tape more than you need by having lead and end time . When you press the record button, it takes most cameras a couple seconds to engage and actually begin recording. Therefore, if you are videotaping someone who is speaking, it is better to have him or her wait to begin speaking until after the camera has been recording about 5 seconds. Every time you stop recording or shut the camera off, the video camera rewinds the tape a little bit. In order to make sure you do not record over anything you may want, it is better to count to 5 after reaching a point when you wish to stop recording. This gives enough end time for the camera to rewind and not tape over the end of the images you want.

Shooting Tips

1. Always frame your shots properly. Use the zoom button to make sure the shots are good. Whatever you want to video tape should fill the screen. Don't leave too much space above people's heads. This is called headroom . Shots with too much headroom are poor.

2. Beware of zooming in and out too much. Use the zoom function only when necessary. Zooming in and out too much is not pleasant to watch. If you are video taping people, the action in the video should come from them more so than the camera.

3. Remember that the video camera is not a toy. Be careful when handling it and if you have any questions or problems ask an adult for help.

4. When you look into the camera viewfinder, you will see words on the top of the screen. Do not let these word distract you. When you frame your shot, it is OK if these words are over your subjects face, they will not be recorded. You want to frame your shot using the whole viewfinder.

Types of Camera Shots or Framing

Television professionals use simple terms to describe what types of camera shots they want. There are three basic types of camera shots that you will probably want to use in your production: the long shot(LS), the medium shot(MS), and the close-up(CU) . The definitions of what these shots include depend on what you are videotaping and your set, but in general the following definitions hold true.

1. long shot shows the entire body of a person or persons and their surroundings. Often you can not see the face(s) in the shot, and long shot is usually use to set the scene.

2. medium shot will generally shows most of a person's body, from the head to just above or just below the waist. Medium shots usually include more than one person and are the standard shots used in most television programs.

3. close-up you will see the head and shoulders of a person or persons. Close-up shots are also used on objects, for example, if you were planning a commercial, you would probably wish to include a close-up shot of your product.

Sometimes television professionals use words like single shot, two-shot, or three-shot to describe what they want. These terms describe the number of people included in the shot. For example, if you were to interview your teacher, you'd probably want a two-shot of the two of you. Practice framing these types of shots with your video camera.

MICROPHONES/AUDIO

1. The microphone : In the world of television what you hear is just as important as what you see. What you see on a television screen is called video , and what you hear is called audio . The audio, for example: conversations, music, sound effects, ambient sound, is recorded onto your video tape through the use of a microphone. There is a microphone built into most video cameras. Often in a school setting, this microphone is not strong enough to pick up what we wish to hear. To compensate for this we use an external microphone - a microphone we attach to the camera.

We basically use three different external microphones: the hand held, the shotgun and the lavalier .

1. Hand held microphones are used in a interview or by a reporter. One or more people can use a hand held Microphone.

2. Shotgun microphones are used when you wish to hear many people speaking or the audio of a larger event, for example a science fair where students are explaining their projects or a concert where you want to properly hear the music.

3. Lavalier microphones are used by one person. The talent who is being video taped, is in a setting where a hand held microphone looks out of place, or in a situation where the talent needs to use his or her hands.

**** The Lavalier and the shotgun microphones need AA batteries in order to work. It is important, when you are done using the microphone, to remove the battery. If you leave the battery in the microphone, and the battery leaks or corrodes, it could ruin the microphone! Always take an extra AA Battery with you!!!!

4. Camera Microphone We use the built in camera

microphone in small rooms, and to collect ambient sound.

Ambient sound is the sound that is always there. For example if you are doing a story about traffic problems at school, and you tape the cars coming in and out of the school, the sounds the cars make is ambient sound.

Audio Cables

All microphones are attached through the mic input on the camera. Usually you will need two cords to do this.

1. XLR is an audio cord, it connects to the microphone you are using. XLR cables have 2 types of connectors, male and Female. The male XLR connector has prongs that connect to an XLR female.

2. XLR to Mini connects the audio cord into the camera. This cord should always be looped around the camera handle to prevent strain on the mic input. Cameras do not have XLR inputs, but microphones do, that is why we use and XLR to MINI, it makes it possible to connect the microphone into the camera. (If you are attaching the shotgun microphone to the top of the camera, you will not need the XLR cord, Just the Mini to XLR, you can use Velcro or tape to attach the microphone to the top of the camera handle.)

All microphones should be tested before use.

Headsets

On most cameras there is an earphone jack or audio out. Plug a set of headsets into this to make sure your mic works. A tape must be in the camera in order for you to hear anything in your headsets. If there is no earphone jack, or you don't have a headset, record a test using the microphone and check what you have recorded on a VCR/monitor. Earphone jacks have a MINI or an RCA input, make sure you have the right adapter on your headsets before you leave to videotape.

AUDIO TIPS

1. When it is important to hear what is going on, make sure your surroundings are quiet, and your microphone is aimed correctly. Most microphones will pick up background noises, and too much background noise can interfere with what you want to hear.

INTERVIEWING

When you interviewing someone follow these rules:

1. Always ask permission. If someone say's NO, NO MEANS NO
2. Pre-interview the person first, that way you will know what they are going to talk about ahead of time, and you can ask questions bases on the pre-interview.
3. Open the interview by saying your name, the other person(s) name, where you are, and what you will be discussing.
4. Make the person you are interviewing feels at home, be kind and respectful, if they are having a hard time answering a question, just say " We'll come back to that one later" and move on to the next question.
5. Don't shove the microphone into the person(s) face, but also don't have them lean over to answer the question.
6. Make sure you and the person you are interviewing are clean and neat. If you are interviewing a 1st grade student and their nose is running, pull them aside and tactfully tell him/her that their nose is running, and get them a tissue. You don't want anyone to be embarrassed with the final product.
7. Always be aware of what is going on around you. Someone might be behind you making an obscene gesture, and you come back to edit your final piece, and you can't use it.
8. Never set up an interview in front of a window, or if you are outside facing the sun. This will make everything look dark,

and you won't be able to see the interview.

9. Always thank the person(s) for allowing you to interview them.

Editing

Editing allows the producer of a project freedom when creating. He or she can video tape out of sequence, correct mistakes when taping and speak as many times as they need to on camera until they get it right. Most video taping is done on what we call a base tape . This tape has all the images of a project. Because base tapes can contain a lot of footage, it is important to keep track of what is on them by maintaining a base tape log . After all the base footage is collected, the producer then decides what he or she wishes to use and edits that material onto a final tape. An editor is a machine which allows you to select what footage you wish to use in your final project.

Most video projects need to be edited to trim excess footage and put the ideas of the project into a sensible order and sequence that is understandable to the viewer. The order of ideas should have already been thought out in a script, but often things change in the course of completing a project.

There are 2 types of editing:

1. Assemble editing is used when you want to use everything on the base tape, the audio, and the video. They are copied directly off of the base tape together.

2. Insert Editing is when you want to separate audio and video. You might like what one person is saying, but you don't like how the video looks, you can just lay down the audio, and find appropriate video that goes with what the person is saying and put that down over the audio. You can manipulate your base tape to fit whatever story you are trying to tell.

Getting Started On Your Own Project

Now that you know the basics, you need to decide what kind of television program you want to create. Here are a few ideas.

1. News Report . A news report is a program that informs the viewers of things that are happening...current events. Most news reports also include a sports update, a weather report, and an entertainment review of a movie, play, or book. There are three basic types of news. International news reports on what is going on around the world. National news reports on what is going on in our country. Local news reports on what is going on in the near area. When putting together your news report you can find stories in the newspaper, magazines, or your local neighborhood and school. Or, if you like, make up your own stories. Maybe you would like to pretend that you are reporting from another country? Maybe you would like to report the news from another planet? Most any idea will work, so be creative and have fun.

Most news reporters either sit at a news desk or are "on the scene" - that is, the place where the news is happening. Think about where you want your news reporters. If you are going to include sports, weather and entertainment decide whether you would like separate reporters for these subjects.

2. Documentary . A documentary is a program that focuses on one subject or issue and informs the viewer about it. A documentary is like a video term paper or report. It includes researched information and video on a certain subject. For example if you were to do a documentary about soccer, you could report on the history of soccer, videotape part of a soccer game and interview a soccer player. Because documentaries involve research and focus on one subject, they make good school projects.

Documentaries are usually factual, but there is no reason why you can not come up with your own ideas. Maybe you'd like to

report on how a new kind of fish has turned the ocean orange. Again, be creative and have fun.

3. Instructional video . Instructional videos or television programs tell the viewer how to do something. These videos take the viewer step by step to the completion of a project. Maybe you'd like to do put together a cooking show and share a favorite recipe? Or explain how to use a new computer program? Again these programs are usually factual, but they don't have to be.

4. Sit coms/Dramas .Sit coms, or situation comedies, and dramas are two types of weekly television programs which tell stories to viewers. These programs follow a plot and have consistent characters who get involved in different situations. If you wish to create a sit com or drama of your own you need to develop characters, a setting, a plot and a plot resolution. Characters are the people in the show. The setting is where the show takes place. The plot is what happens to the characters in the show - what conflicts they encounter. The plot resolution is how the conflicts are settled. This kind of television show can be a lot of fun to make, but also a lot of work. One note about sit coms and dramas: there is a lot of television that is very violent. It would be nice to make it your goal to make television shows with out violence. See if you can live up to this challenge.

5. Game shows . A game show is a program where contestants compete against one another to win prizes. There are many ways of competing: answering trivia questions, and guessing words are just a couple. If you wish to make your own game show, decide on how the game is played, how many contestants you want, what the rules are, and how a person wins. You may also want to use music buzzers and bells for right or wrong answers and offer prizes for the winners. Game shows can be a lot of fun to create and videotape.

6. Commercials . A commercial is a television advertisement for a product - such as laundry detergent or cereal - or a service - such as a house painter or a place to go on vacation. Most commercials are very short and can include music, demonstrations of how well the product works and people who enjoy using the

product. When creating a commercial, keep in mind the following questions: what does the product or service do? and why should I buy it? Experiment with making commercials for existing products and services and products and services that you make up.

7. Public Service Announcements . Public Service Announcements, or PSAs are like commercials except they don't advertise something that you can buy. Instead they promote, or tell you about, an idea or issue. PSAs are one way to help get information out to people that they can use to better themselves or the community. There are many PSAs on television that warn viewers about the dangers of using drugs and the dangers of smoking. There are also PSAs that ask people not to waste water or paper and to help better the environment by recycling. If you wish to create a PAS, decide what you want to focus on and how you wish to present your information.

8. Featured Presentations . Featured presentations can be whatever you want them to be. It can be a special story you wish to tell, person you wish to interview or show you'd like to perform. Maybe something special has taken place in your math class. Anything that is original is great for a featured presentation.

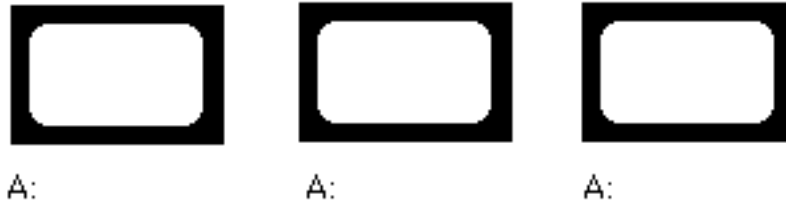
It's important to choose something that you (and your crew) will like doing. Keep in mind that you can combine any of the above ideas or use some of your own. Many of the things we will want to focus on are ones that are taking place in school and the community. Begin thinking about what formats we can use to present these ideas creatively.

Planning Your Project

Any good television program involves a lot of planning and rehearsal before the actual videotaping. Television professionals use two main formats to plan their programs, the television storyboard and the television script.

When creating television, producers have to be concerned with both audio and video. Again, video is what you see and audio is what you hear. When you plan out your television program you need to plan out both the video and the audio.

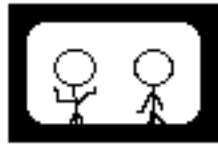
One way of doing this is to use a storyboard. A storyboard is a way of visually planning out your project. A storyboard form looks like this.



The boxes represent the video, while the space underneath each box represents the corresponding audio. A storyboard illustrates the key shots in a television program and each video block represents a change in action. Sound confusing? Take a look at this example:



A: Mom: "Kids,
shut off the tv."
Kids: "Aww."



A: Jay: "What
can we do?"
Sue: "I don't
know."



A: dreary music then Sue
says: "I'm so bored."



A: Mom: "Kids,
get up and look."



A: Mom: "In that
case is a video
camera. Why
don't you make
a TV program?"



A: Jay and Sue:
"Okay!"

The above storyboard tells the story of two kids who are bored and don't know what to do. In the first scene, or first block, Jay and

Sue are watching TV. Their Mom calls from the other room to tell them to shut it off. In the next block, Jay and Sue wonder what to do. The next block shows us that Jay and Sue are so bored they are just lying around on the floor. We hear dreary music and then Sue says she is bored. In block 4, the Mom comes in and points to something. In block 5 we see what she is pointing at and are told that it is the camera case. Finally, in block 6 we see the two kids holding the case, ready to start on their TV program.

The above is a very simple and basic storyboard. It shows what happens without going into too much detail. The main thing to notice is that each time the video changes, you need a different block. If the audio changes, (different people speak or there is the addition of music) you can use the same block if the video is the same. Don't worry if your storyboard isn't perfect. Use it as a way of planning, and as long as you understand it, it is fine.

It is best to use a storyboard when planning a commercial, PSA or news report. For longer programs, use a television script. A television script is an all written way of planning out a program. The format consists of two columns, one for audio and one for video. The audio column is wider to allow room for all the conversation, music and sound effects. Just like a storyboard, a television script plans out all the visuals and sounds in a program.

For example:

Video	Audio
LS of Jay and Sue watching TV	TV sounds Mom: "Kids, shut off the TV." Jay and Sue: "Awww."
MS of Jay and Sue	Jay: "What can we do?" Sue: "I don't know."
MS of Jay and Sue lying on floor	Dreary music playing, then stops Sue: "I'm bored."

LS of Jay, Sue and Mom
CU of case

Mom: "Kids, get up and look. In that case is a video camera. Why don't you make a TV program?"

CU of Jay and Sue holding case. Jay and Sue: "Okay!"

Before writing your script or storyboard you should fill out a Project Planning Sheet . This helps you organize your thoughts and information. All project planning sheets should be approved before you begin writing your script. All scripts should be written out on the script form.

After you've written your script, you are a step away from videotaping. The step in between is rehearsal. The people who are to appear in your program are called talent. It is important for your talent to learn their lines and rehearse several times before videotaping. If there are too many lines to learn and memorizing is not possible you may wish to use cue cards. Cue cards are pieces of large paper - you may use posterboard or a chalkboard - which have the talent's lines written on them in large print. Cue cards are held near the camera lens so it looks on the tape as if the talent is looking right at the viewer.

Once you are rehearsed and you are ready to go, begin videotaping your project. Remember to include lead and end time as you proceed. When you have completed videotaping, look at your finished products and congratulate yourself on your hard work. Then look at your project again what worked well and what could be improved for next time. This is called critiquing. It may be a good idea to keep your critiques in a separate notebook to refer to when you put together your next program.